

Voice of Grace

We are called to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments.

We gather in Christian community for nurture and support. We are sent out in service to others.



Pastor Sean with the new baptismal font, which was recently donated to Grace by Lynn Bender in memory of his late wife Joan. Joan was a very active member of Grace for many years. Thank you, Lynn.

Worship - Sundays 10:30 a.m.



September 2024

Pastor's Message

*I love to tell the story
for those who know it best,
seem hungering and thirsting
to hear it like the rest...*

The third verse of Kate Hankey's old familiar hymn (1866) speaks to the way Christians are inspired by the Biblical story, from creation to fall, promise to rebellion, captivity and release, subjugation by empire and incarnation of a Savior: his life of teaching and his death of shame. A resurrection of Jesus' triumph against the power of death and a way of water and Word, bread and wine, body and blood which guides us all along the way.



In line with this, I want to share with you a little bit about a new way of telling that story that we will begin at Grace this fall. Beginning with our Sept. 8 worship service, our readings from Scripture during Sunday worship will come from the Narrative Lectionary developed in 2010 at Luther Seminary in Minneapolis.

Until now, we have used on Sundays the appointed readings from the Revised Common Lectionary. The RCL is a three-year cycle, "revised" most recently in 1994 from what originated a quarter-century earlier in the Roman Catholic Church following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Each of the three years derives most (but nowhere near all!) of its Gospel readings from one or another of the synoptics: Matthew, Mark and Luke. The Gospel of John gets sprinkled across each of the three years, more so Mark's year than any other due to the brevity of the oldest Gospel account of Jesus' life. There are additional readings each week from the Old Testament, the rest of the New Testament and a Psalm.

One aspect of the RCL is it is indeed "common." It is used so widely throughout most liturgical-based churches that you can compare notes on the same texts you heard after worship with your Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist and Reformed friends. There is something kind of wonderful about knowing thousands of churches the world over are hearing the same lessons.

However, the RCL is more prone to "jumping around" in the Biblical narrative. It can be hard to remember where we are in the Gospel in relation to other events in Jesus' life and ministry. And entering into a new season in the church calendar like Advent or Lent can occur quite abruptly within the series of readings. Through its course, between 55 and 60 percent of the Gospels are read on Sundays and major festivals in the church calendar, about one-quarter of the rest of the New Testament and a mere 4 percent of the Old Testament.

The Narrative Lectionary takes a different approach. It gives us a four-year cycle on the Sundays from September through May, with the lessons "arranged in a narrative sequence to help people see Scripture as a story that has coherence and a dynamic movement," according to narrativelectionary.org.

In other words, it centers on telling the story.

Per Luther Seminary, from September to mid-December the Sunday texts begin with the early chapters of Genesis, move through the stories of Israel's early history, the exodus, the kings, prophets, exile and return. From Christmas to Easter there is sustained reading of one of the four gospels in the order it is written. From Easter to Pentecost the texts are chosen from Acts and Paul's letters, highlighting the emergence of the early church. Each of the four Gospels gets to take center stage, including John getting its own year.

The most startling difference you may notice right away is having just one or two readings. When the main text, as in fall, is not from the Gospels, the accompanying Gospel reading is brief. Often it is just a single verse. The Narrative Lectionary is designed with the recognition that many in worship find it helpful to have fewer texts to focus on.

It is also noteworthy the Narrative Lectionary year concludes at Pentecost and doesn't resume until September. This opens the summer to multi-week preaching series or other sorts of experimentation.

While less common than the Revised Common, the Narrative Lectionary is growing in its use and I have found it to be more popular among colleagues of my generation. While it began in an ELCA seminary, it is also becoming more widely used in other mainline liturgical traditions. For my part, not having come from a liturgical tradition I wanted to familiarize myself with the RCL fairly well before dabbling in the newer lectionary form. Since I began to do pulpit supply at my then-home church of Faith Lutheran in Murphys, California, I have now been through the RCL for nearly four full cycles.

Pastor's Message continued

I'm ready to try on something new, something that I hope will present the Scripture to us in a new way and grow our understanding of God's Word. It will take some getting used to but I have heard good things from colleagues who have made the switch and nothing from anyone about regretting it.

I hope you will be enriched and rewarded for trying on this experiment with me.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Sean

What's Up in September

September 8 – God's Work, Our Hands

Bring food for our local food bank – and get a jump start on the W.A.V.E. Food Drive

Also on September 8, We will welcome new members of Grace with an affirmation of baptism.

Choir begins the fall/winter season.

Dr. Rick Rouse presentation. (see article elsewhere in this edition of the Voice of Grace.)

September 15 – Fall Fellowship Feast & Fun!

Bratwursts, burgers, beverages provided!

A Christian Education Special Presentation

Christian Nationalism, by The Rev. Dr. Rick Rouse
Sunday, Sept. 8, at Grace Lutheran Church.

Dr. Rouse has served as a pastor and teacher in the ELCA for nearly 50 years. He was adjunct professor at Luther Seminary and served as president of the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary advisory board during Pastor Sean's three-year term on the board.

Recent writings of Dr. Rouse include the books *"The World is About to Turn: Mending a Nation's Broken Faith"* and *"A Journey Called Hope: Today's Immigrant Stories and the American Dream,"* as well as the 2022 article for *"Americans so divided... and what should the church do about it?"* (<https://faithlead.org/blog/american-christianity-in-crisis>)

Since 2019, the American Baptist Commission on Religious Liberty has been warning about the dangers that Christian Nationalism poses to the future of both democracy and Christianity in this country. They issued the following statement in response: "Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and

American identities, distorting both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian. It often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation. We reject this damaging political ideology and invite our Christian brothers and sisters to join us in opposing this threat to our faith and to our nation ... Whether we worship at a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple, America has no second-class faiths. All are equal under the U.S. Constitution. As Christians, we must speak in one voice condemning Christian nationalism as a distortion of the gospel of Jesus and a threat to American democracy." For more information, visit ChristiansAgainstChristianNationalism.org.

The Church and Civic Politics

A Zoom discussion with Bishop Jaech and Tom Hust, Synod Vice-President
September 19, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

As we look at both our Lutheran teachings and the Constitution of the United States, what are the rights and duties of church members and church denominations as we guide our cities, states, and nation through complicated times? Join us to consider and discuss together the working relationship between the Church and Civic Politics.

There is much media discussion currently about those who, on one hand, promote Christian nationalism and those who, on the other hand, insist on a wall of separation between church and state.

Lutherans in the United States have the tradition of practicing a third, middle way. What is that third way?

- How do Lutheran Christians work together with civic political institutions to build and maintain a just society?
- How do we help democracy to function in a way that the voice and well-being of every person is honored?
- How do we follow Jesus and "love our neighbor" in the face of the critical problems that often divide us?

To register for this discussion, email the Synod Office at swwsynod@plu.edu to receive the Zoom link to join the event and also receive background resource material.

Through Jeremiah, God said, "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you." In this discussion together, we will learn from each other and ask the Holy Spirit to help us know how to do just that.

A Wonderful Story

by Mary Ronen

Some of you may recall Haydn Werdal. He is the son of my daughter's friend. In 2014, when he was about 11 years old, he contracted a serious virus causing what was diagnosed as what was thought to be acute flaccid myelitis. He was completely paralyzed from the neck down. I asked that he be put on our prayer list.



He refused to be beaten down by this terrible disease. He attended school as he was able with the help of his mom and aides. Sometimes it was necessary that he study at home. He took that in stride. He kept up his friendships and he enjoyed an active social life.

After graduating high school, he went on to attend college. In June of this year, he graduated Magna cum Laude with a BA in psychology.

His plan now is to obtain his PhD in Quantitative Research, with a focus on Disability and Trauma. At this time he has not picked his school. Way to go, Haydn! Thanks be to God.

The Plum

by Linda Gaenicke

While growing up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I knew of many Lutheran congregations. At certain times during the year the various churches would gather for meetings and church business. These gatherings were always well attended and even as a young teenager it was required that I attend along with my parents. These gatherings were boring for me as well as all the other young members of the congregation.

One memory that I have still brings a smile to me. One of the ladies from another church who always attended was known for her hats that she designed herself. These self-designed hats were downright comical and also ugly.

Now, I have to mention that my mother was a woman who could not stop laughing once she started. Her laughter always spread to anyone near her, usually me. My father was head usher and expected good behavior from me during services. He would give me "the look" and I knew that I had to behave.

During one of these meetings the "hat lady" arrived and proceeded to sit in the pew in front of me and my mother. The creation she was wearing on her head looked like a fruit basket, and of course it was filled with different kinds of artificial fruits. My mother took one look at the hat and turned away from me. I knew that she was trying to control her laughter. During every hymn that we sang, the fruit on the hat would wobble and bounce around. By the time the second verse of a hymn was sung, my mother had covered her mouth with her handkerchief and was jiggling up and down with laughter. I too started to laugh and struggled to keep quiet and put my hand over my mouth to try to keep quiet. At times I thought that I had my laughter under control; however, another piece of fruit would wobble or bounce and we would start laughing again. My father gave us "the look" as he took the collection. We managed to keep quiet, but then the unexpected happened. While the lady in front of us was hitting a high note in a hymn, a plum fell off the hat and fell onto my mother's lap. There was no controlling our laughter after that. The tears were rolling down our cheeks and we could no longer keep quiet. During the sermon we got up and left the church. We managed to get to the ladies' room before we really let loose with our laughter. There was no controlling us and trying to stop the laughter only made it harder for us to stop.

A few days passed, and people who attended the service commented that they were moved by the way the sermon affected my mother and I. Little did they know it was laughter and not divine inspiration that caused us to leave the church. Several months later, all I had to say to my mother was "plum," and we both would laugh at the memory of it all.

Coming in October

Southwestern Washington Synodical Women's Annual fall convention!

Our October WELCA convention will be held at Agnus Dei Lutheran Church in Gig Harbor. Keynote speaker will be Stacy Kitahata, co-director of Holden Village.

Creating community and making positive connections is a focus of who we are and where we are going not just as people, but especially as women of our local churches and in our synod. What does this connection look like? How can we communicate needs? Hopes? Goals? And more, as women of our synod, our conferences and our churches. Stacy will share some of her ideas and thoughts under the theme of "Becoming Courageous Community."

Saturday, October 12, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Agnus Dei in Gig Harbor.

More convention information can be found in The SWATCH.

The Boat

by Betty Oakes



People have asked me at one time or another during the 50 years that I've lived in Port Townsend, "What brought you to Port Townsend?"

My answer—well, it's a long story and the short answer is "a boat."

Why a boat and what's the long answer? Well, it all started in Las Vegas (I know, I know it's not on the ocean). Shortly after I graduated from high school (in Henderson, Nevada, which is next to Las Vegas), I went to work as a secretary at Nellis AFB, which is just outside Las Vegas.

While there I met a handsome career Air Force guy (Rex) and yes, ended up marrying him in less than a year. He retired from the USAF shortly thereafter and went to work for the Las Vegas Metropolitan police force. We bought a house, and shortly after that my Seattle-born-and-raised husband wanted to buy a 23-foot Owens cabin cruiser so that we could spend

Boat continued

our weekends cruising Lake Mead (a short distance from Las Vegas). That was fine until he spotted a 40-foot boat lying on the shore of Lake Mead with a For Sale sign on it. This boat had definitely seen better days, and I was totally against the purchase. (My objections did not work.)

The history of the boat was impressive. It was a Penobscot Trawler built for Mayor Cermak of Chicago during the roaring 20's. The woodwork inside was beautiful but in a really sad state.

We ended up selling our house in Las Vegas and moving into my parents' house (with a large back yard) in Henderson where we had the boat hauled from the lake. It was a 3-year project but Rex finished it the fall of 1972 and we had it hauled back to the lake (pictures of the Christening are attached). We lived on the boat on the lake for 6 months and had it hauled to the ocean (Southern California) in June of 1973 where we cruised up the coast to the San Francisco Delta then down into Mexico for 6 months and went as far South as Acapulco. Then we headed back up the coast to Seattle where we moored the boat. During this time we turned the boat into a fishing boat and fished out of Neah Bay.

After a couple of years in Seattle we thought we would look for a quieter place to live. It was up to me to find the right marina/location/city, and after checking out several locations around the NW, I came to Port Townsend and felt immediately welcomed.

So, that was 1975 and I've been here ever since. We lived in the Boat Haven until 1981 when we bought our first house. Rex passed away in 1997. I thought at that time that I would move back to Las Vegas, but guess what? I would miss the water and the trees. So yes—it was a boat that brought Rex and me here!!!!

Good News from Uganda

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I want to report some good news about Harunah Mugonza. As you remember, he graduated with a Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Community Health. He has always wanted to return for a degree in Medicine and Surgery. The Good News is that he has found a way to do it.

I guided him to go for government sponsorship. He applied through the government education loan Scheme Under Kampala International University, his original University, and his application was considered. He already finished a semester of the program, and by December he will have completed his first academic year, remaining are four and half years to complete a five-year program of study.

Kenneth

Hello,

I am Mugonza Harunah, a beneficiary of the Entire Congregation of Grace Lutheran Church, America. Through your unconditional support, I hold a diploma in Clinical Medicine and Community Health. I am now doing a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and my dream is to be a surgeon. I am in the second semester of first year at Kampala international University. This semester I am doing several course units - human anatomy, medical physiology, medical biochemistry, Community Diagnosis (COBERMS), Nursing Skills, and Histology.

I am so inspired by the need for medical personnel in a country where the ratio of doctors to patients is 1:25,000. In Uganda good health facilities are highly concentrated in cities, leaving those in distant places without the chance to access good health services in medical emergencies and surgeries. Those who cannot afford to hire cars to transport them to distant health services find it difficult to have access to such services.

I started a medical clinic to support the community. We agreed that my wife, Nangonzi Esther, who is a nurse, will be in charge of the clinic and give services to the community as I prepare. However, we do have hope that she is to go back to school for her upgrading in nursing.

I believe we will save the lives of our children and mothers who die during birth due to lack of access to health services.

I also believe that my becoming a Surgeon will be an example to empower the future generation with hope and determination to reach their dreams.

I am so humbled and thankful for the great support you always give to me and all other beneficiaries.

May God bless you abundantly, Mugonza Harunah

From Mary's Computer

Thank you, thank you! Thanks to everyone who submitted their story for the *Voice of Grace*. By doing so, we all get to know each other a little better. So keep them coming. Don't be afraid that people will be bored; please don't think you have nothing of importance to say. Everyone has a story. And, we all enjoy them.

September is here. I love Fall. It is my favorite time of the year. Trees are changing color, and the air has a certain quality to it that I can't quite put my finger on. But I love it. New things, and old things, are happening here at Grace. Kids are going back to school. Isn't it great!

I am not sure exactly where I thought I was going with all this, but I feel blessed. I just thank God for it all.
Mary

Memories



Lois & Chelsea celebrate Arrow of Light with Cub Scouts Cameron & Josiah



Port Townsend Pride in June



William Chapman Nyaho piano concert



Grace Financials

Faith practices for tough times

“Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea.... Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken” (Psalm 55:1, 22, NIV).

In this psalm, we hear from someone who long ago experienced distress, fear, isolation. Then, he also had that moment when God’s word resonated and reminded him that the Lord would sustain us. The Lord will never let the righteous stumble. Turning to God in times of struggle helps us survive.

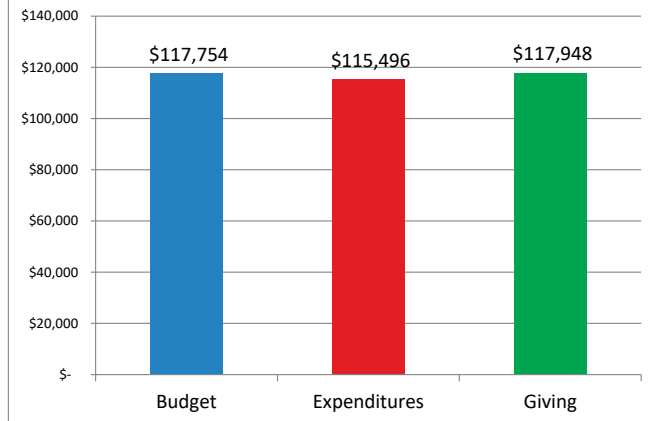
Participating in faith practices – daily reading of scripture, personal prayer, and quiet meditation – will not remove our fears or feelings, but they can provide hope.

I encourage you to think about what spiritual practices are part of your daily life. Find moments where you can feel God’s presence and hear God’s voice.

Knowing that God is with us strengthens my resolve to get through one more day, to tell myself to be patient, to seek out connections with people, and to continue to live as if the gospel is true.

This message is excerpted from “Participating in faith practices offers hope” by Jennifer Michael from the June 22, 2020, blog of the Women of the ELCA

Year to Date through July 31, 2024



Let's fill this up.

Mark Your Calendar

Worship, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
 Quilting, Mondays at 10 a.m.
 Prayers Against Cancer, Last Thursdays, 2 p.m.
 Lectionary Study, Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m.
 Real Life 101: Fourth Saturdays at 11 a.m.
 Men's Bible Breakfast, Fridays at 8 a.m., at The Roadhouse
 Via de Cristo Reunion, 2nd & 4th Friday evenings at 5:30 p.m.
 Council, 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m.

Grace Council

President: Al Smith
alsmithnpt@gmail.com
Vice President: Tammy Rumpel
Secretary: Jan Schroeder
Ministers:
Resources (Treasurer): Dennis Struecker
Facilities: Steve Brantner
Social Concerns: Don Fristoe

Grace Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Sean Janssen
revseanjanssen@gmail.com
Office Manager: Crissy Dunlap
gracelutheranpt@gmail.com
Organist/Pianist: Elise Sinclair
Choir Director: Sarah Moran
enchantsinger@gmail.com
Editor, Voice of Grace: Mary Ronen,
maryronen@gmail.com:
Facebook: [facebook.com/GraceLutheranPT](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranPT)

Photos of church events may be published in print or online. If you do not want your picture included, please contact the office at gracelutheranpt@gmail.com or (360)385-1595.